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Lydia Huntley Sigourney

LYDIA HUNTLEY SIGOURNEY.



RS. SIGOURNEY is a native of Norwich, Connecticut, and was born near the close of the last century. Her father,

Mr. E. Huntley, bore a part in the war that gave freedom to our country, and throughout a long life was respected for his example of stainless integrity, and amiable piety. Her mother, whose maiden name was Wentworth, was a beautiful, bright-minded woman, of quick perceptions, and acute sensibilities. This daughter, their only child, was brought up with the most devoted affection, yet in those strenuous habits of obedience, diligence, and order, which characterized the ancient regime of New England.

Her intellect was decidedly precocious, yet combined with application and perseverance. It may be truly said that her love of books began with infancy, as she

read at the age of three, with distinctness and pleasure, and composed simple verses at seven, which, as if the impulse were a thing to be ashamed of, she carefully concealed. Some degree of this peculiar delicacy has continued with her, and it has been remarked by her intimate friends that she never alludes to her numerous writings unless they are mentioned by others.

The best advantages of education which could be attained in her childhood and youth, were accorded her and it was both her principle and practice to improve them all to the utmost. At the conclusion of her scholastic period, which was in those days much shorter than at present, she engaged in the instruction of a select number of young ladies. This, it seems, had been her favorite aspiration and reverie, when a child, and she has always accounted the years thus devoted as among the happiest and most useful of her life. Her system was to teach thoroughly whatever she attempted, and to develop, not the mental powers alone, but those affections which fit her sex for their own allotted and hallowed

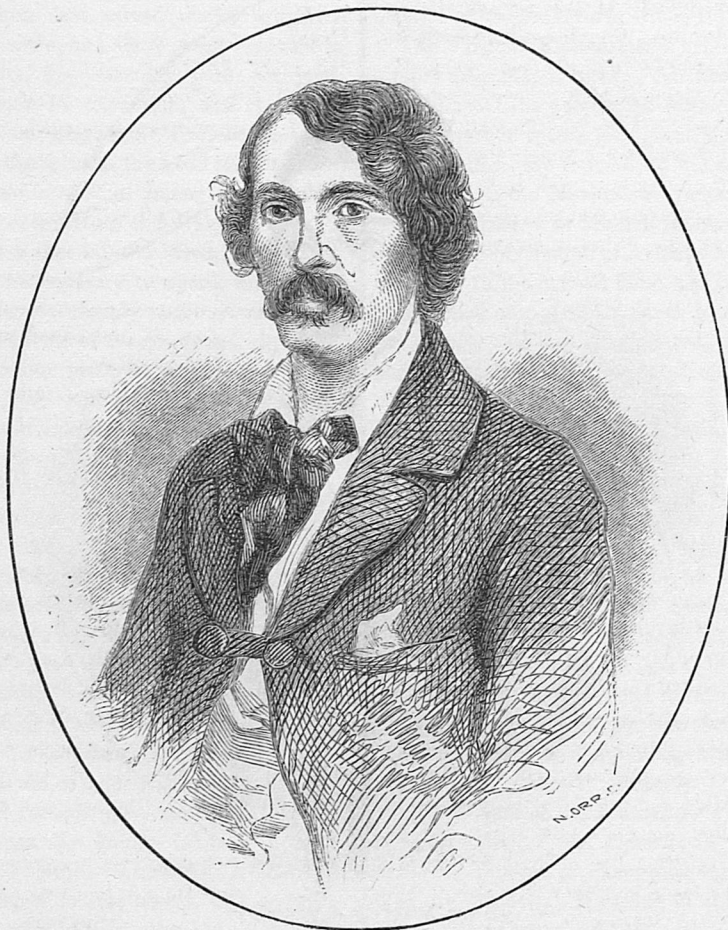
sphere. The tenderest friendship sprang up between her and the sisterly band that thus surrounded her, bequeathing its influence to even a second generation.

At the termination of her mission as a teacher, she became the wife of Charles Sigourney, Esq., a merchant of Hartford, a gentleman of distinguished family, talents and acquirements. To her new duties at the head of a large establishment she gave earnest heed, determining not to overlook the minutest cares that affect domestic welfare and prosperity. In addition to these employments, she chose to become the teacher of her children, two of whom attained maturity. The death of her only son, in the bloom of nineteen, prompted that touching and graphic memoir "The Faded Hope," which can scarcely be read without tears. By systematic industry and early rising, she found it possible to continue intellectual pursuits, without sacrificing domestic or social responsibilities. Poetry, whose "linked harmonies" attracted her infant ear, like the song of the bee, which knows not the name of the flower around which it hovers, has been her unchanging solace through life. Though the native expression of her thought, she has often abandoned it for the composition of prose, as a vehicle of greater utility, and more congenial to the taste of the people.

It may be considered a mark of self-subjugation, that amid the many volumes she has produced, not more than eight or ten have been in her favorite dialect, if we except those where poetry and prose are mingled. Through her long course of literary labor, not the desire of fame, but of doing good, seems to have been, not a secondary, but the predominating motive. This we infer from the themes she has chosen, and their adaptation to almost every form of duty or condition of humanity. Especially have the true interests of her own sex, and the healthful influence they might exercise on home-happiness; and the destinies of the Republic, dwelt on her heart, and stimulated its efforts. Her "Letters to Pupils," "Letters to Young Ladies," "Whisper to a Bride," and "Letters to Mothers," attest her regard for their highest, holiest responsibilities. The guidance of the unfolding mind, impressed on her as it was, night and day, by the assiduous home-culture of her own children, called forth the "Child's Book," "Girl's Book," "Boy's Book," "How to be Happy," and a variety of other juvenile works, in which she has evidently chastened

her style, and turned aside from trains of thought more consonant to her genius. A conviction of the importance of temperance, suggested "Water Drops;" of the blessings of peace, "Olive Leaves;" "Scenes in my Native Land," portray some of the attractions of the country that she loves, and "Pleasant Memories of Pleasant Lands," depict the varieties of a tour in Europe, which was cheered by attentions from distinguished writers, letters from nobles, and gifts from royalty. "Those who go down to the sea in ships," find a companion in her simple "Poems for Sailors;" the forgotten red man is remembered in "Pocahontas;" the harp of comfort for mourners is hung upon the "Weeping Willow," while the young and blooming may hear her "Voice of Flowers," among the lilies of the field. Several volumes of tales and sketches, give truth and virtue the garniture of narrative, and a still larger number of a biographical character hold up to every grade and lot in life the examples of wisdom and piety. "Sayings of the Little Ones, and Poems for their Mothers," express her sympathies for the helpless stranger just entering life; and "Past Meridian," for the wearied pilgrim, trembling at the gates of the West. Since she entered the field of authorship, between fifty and sixty volumes, varying in size from the miniature to the octavo, have emanated from her pen. Some of these are now out of print, though more than half are in active circulation, and many have been republished on the other side of the Atlantic.

She still continues, with unchanging industry, her intellectual labors, amid many interruptions, and sustains, without the aid of an amanuensis, the pressure of a correspondence amounting to nearly two thousand letters annually. Her style and sentiments are always pure; and her writings, if judged by their tendencies, are blameless. It may be justly affirmed that they contain "no line which, dying, she might wish to blot." Though past the age of sixty, she enjoys with unimpaired powers that happiness of existence which sometimes brightens with time. The religion that has sustained her from youth, is without bigotry—a love of all of whatever denomination, who "fear God, and keep His commandments." Those who best know her, are convinced that from deeds of benevolence, and the interchange of the affections, she derives far higher satisfaction, than from the alluring and not untasted fountains of popular applause.



James M. Hart.

JAMES M. HART.



NEW-YORK, in Art, as in Literature and the Drama, is loth to acknowledge any position, except such as her connoisseurs and critics indicate. A "metropolitan" endorsement, her people have grown to believe, is necessary, ere the candidate for public favor can achieve any permanent place in the Pantheon of Genius. Miss Heron oscillated, like a brilliant star, from San Francisco to New-Orleans and St. Louis and Cincinnati, but the New-York press and public simply "pooh-poohed!" and said, "Wait until *we* pronounce upon her merits!" The lady instantly dared the ordeal: she came and conquered; and now reigns a bright *par-*

ticular star—not from any virtue in metropolitan criticism, or astute discrimination upon the part of the New-York Public, but simply because her "provincially" trained genius was perfectly at ease, even upon a New-York stage. Her history is that of many an actor, many an artist, many a writer, and, doubtless, will be the experience of many yet to come. Much as "the country" may dislike this centralization, it *will* prevail. The lazzaroni of Naples give position to every great singer in Europe; why should not the—well, the people and press of New-York, give position to every singer, and painter, and poet, and actor in America?

JAMES M. HART commenced the practice of his profession, several years since, in Albany. Success followed even upon his earliest contributions to the art of his State. Patronage was not withheld, and he was not long in attaining the means for the European trip and foreign study. In